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Federal Aid Will Be Asked To Improve N. Y. Schools

Board of Education President Says City
Must Be Treated as a Special Case

By NAT. S. FINNEY
Buffalo Evening News Bureau

WASHINGTON, April 11 — James B. Donovan, president of New York City's beleaguered school board, has planted an idea in this national capital that could make a tree grow in Brooklyn.

The stocky New Yorker, more famous for his negotiating exploits in international affairs than for his handling of the New York City school integration dilemma, says he is about to ask the Federal Government for a substantial chunk of money to improve Gotham's public schools.

But he went a bit further than that during a question and answer period at a National Press Club luncheon Friday. He was asked where Uncle Sam could get the money he needs in New York City.

Special Consideration

"Well, they might dip some of it out of the amounts they are handing to Latin American countries, where it mostly winds up in numbered Swiss bank accounts, anyhow," he replied.

The president of the New York City school board did not appear to be joking when he said this, and, considering the reluctance of members of Congress to appropriate foreign aid money, they may not take it as a joke either.

The New York attorney, who was Democratic candidate for the U. S. Senate against Senator Keating in 1958, was in a dead serious vein during the question period.

Special Case

He claimed New York City is entitled to special consideration by the Federal Government because it is a special case.

New York City, he said, is the port of debarkation for a flood of new arrivees both from foreign lands and Puerto Rico, and a stopping place for a continuing migration of American Negroes from the South.

"To ask the city to carry this whole burden is no more fair than it would have been to ask the City of Miami to bear the whole burden of looking after the Cuban exiles," he challenged.

Mr. Donovan has personal familiarity with the Miami problem because it was he who negotiated the release of the Bay of Pigs survivors for President Kennedy, and got them brought to Miami for immigration processing.

Best Place to Start

The New York attorney, who was one of the late Gen. William (Wild Bill) Donovan's top lieutenants in the war-time Office of Strategic Services, was not prepared to say how much he would ask from the Federal Government for New York City schools.

But he held that state and local contributions to the school costs of Gotham are not sufficient to properly handle New York City's task of educating 1.1 million public school pupils, and he added:

"If the Federal Government is interested in getting something done about poverty, there isn't any better place to start than in New York City."

"Sanity and Reason" Needed

Mr. Donovan, who was awake to the fact that a number of District of Columbia Negroes were in his Press Club audience, held that integrated schools are a top priority in New York City, but he stiffly warned that the New York City school board has a first responsibility for education.

"We need some voices of sanity and reason," he declared. "We can't do things that will accelerate the white flight to the suburbs, and we won't yield to intimidation."

He complained that "slogans and tactics from other areas," where they may be appropriate, are being applied to New York City problems.

Defends CIA

During the course of the question and answer period Mr. Donovan staunchly defended a "Central Intelligence Agency" as the United States' "first line of defense."

In discussing his work as a "public defender" in handling the defense of Rudolf Abel on espionage charges, and later arranging the exchange of Abel for Francis Gary Powers, the CIA's U-2 pilot, Mr. Donovan brusquely countered a suggestion that U. S. agents should be considered "expedient."

"I don't think you could enroll much of an intelligence agency if you accepted that proposition," he said. "We have an obligation to do everything possible to get a man out of trouble if he gets into it serving his country," Mr. Donovan said.